



THE SOURCE



NEWSLETTER OF THE NHDES DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION PROGRAM
ON THE WEB AT WWW.DES.STATE.NH.US/DWSPP

SUMMER 2003

Source Protection Workshop for Planners A Success!

More than 50 regional and municipal planners, water suppliers, and concerned citizens gathered in the DES auditorium on May 15, 2003 to learn more about source water protection measures in New Hampshire. The workshop was offered to familiarize planners with source protection techniques and finding resources. The day's topics included the following: common approaches to source water protection, water use efficiency, private wells, municipal authority for regulating water, regionalization, encouraging groundwater recharge, source water assessments, and funding opportunities. The workshop also provided background on groundwater concepts and new initiatives and developments by DES.

Workshop evaluations revealed that the majority of participants were pleased with the workshop and felt it was a good use of their time. Several participants suggested that this type of workshop should be held again, perhaps with a focus on stormwater issues and/or best management practices. DWSPP staff will incorporate these suggestions when planning future events.

Unable to attend the workshop? Never fear! We have posted workshop proceedings on our website. Visit us at www.des.state.nh.us/dwspp/SWProtect/ to view the presentations of each speaker.



Keep An Eye On Your Mailbox For...

Source Protection Grant Application

Applications for the 2004 Source Water Protection Grants will be sent out to water systems, regional planning commissions and consultants in late August and will be due in November. Grant funds of up to \$15,000 per project are available to develop and implement programs to protect existing sources of drinking water. Since 1997, DES has awarded \$200,000-\$250,000 each year to fund a total of 93 protection projects. Some of the projects include security upgrades for installing fences and gates. Other projects include reclassification of groundwater, education, and the development of protection ordinances. Last year's application is currently available at www.des.state.nh.us/dwspp/grants.htm along with a summary of previously funded projects.

Invitation to Free Security Training

WSEB will be contracting with Custer Battles, LLC to conduct vulnerability assessment and security training for systems serving 500 people or more. The 3-day workshops, to be held around the state starting in August, will also include training on NEWWA's Vulnerability Assessment Tool (a CD that systems serving 3,300 people or more received in June).

This training will aid systems serving 3,300 people or more in their requirement to submit a vulnerability assessment to EPA by June 30, 2004 (as required by the 2002 Bioterrorism Act). It will also help smaller systems harden themselves against acts of vandalism. Workshop dates will be mailed to systems and can be found at www.des.state.nh.us/wseb.

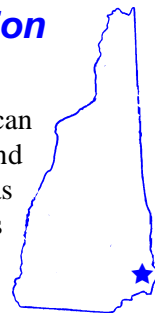
Questions concerning these grants, security training, or other security issues should be directed to Johnna McKenna at 271-7017 or jmckenna@des.state.nh.us.



Spotlight on ... The Exeter River

Local Advisory Committee is Focal Point for Protection

By Theresa Walker, Rockingham Planning Commission



The Exeter River is the primary source for the Exeter Water Department, which serves 70 percent of the town's approximately 15,000 residents. The river originates 33 miles away in a group of spring-fed ponds in Chester, and then flows through seven communities, several of

which are among the fastest growing in the region. In downtown Exeter, it becomes a tidal river known as the Squamscott River, the largest tributary to Great Bay.

In 1996, communities along the Exeter River succeeded in getting the river enrolled in DES's Rivers Management and Protection Program and establishing the Exeter River Local Advisory Committee

(ERLAC). Since then, ERLAC has been a tireless champion for the river, having written a watershed management plan, held several workshops on local land use regulations for Planning Boards and Conservation Commissions, partnered with Conservation Commissions on programs for the general public, and created the annual Exeter River Alewife Festival.

The primary purpose of the day-long festival is to bring together the river's various stakeholders and cheerleaders, all of whom share a common resource – the Exeter River. The goal is to raise awareness of the need to protect water quality and quantity and wildlife habitat. Stakeholders include environmental organizations such as the Rockingham Land Trust and Great Bay Coast Watch; historical groups such as the Exeter

Historical Society and the American Independence Museum; state and local government programs such as the New Hampshire Estuaries Project and the Town of Exeter's Department of Public Works; and recreational users such as Trout Unlimited and New Hampshire Fish and Game's Lets Go Fishing program.

The third annual festival was held May 31st, in time for the annual migration of alewives from the Atlantic Ocean to their spawning grounds in the Exeter River. Live music, live animals, food, activities for kids, tours of the fish ladder, and a canoe and kayak race attracted several hundred area residents. Those who attended learned about the many roles the river plays in the region's past, present and future, as well as what they could do to protect the river from the impacts of human activity. Plans have already begun for 2004.

For more information on ERLAC's activities, contact Theresa Walker of the Rockingham Planning Commission at 778-0885.

Viewpoints expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of DES. DES has not verified the accuracy of all statements in the article. Identification of any product or brand does not constitute endorsement by DES.

Guest Articles in The Source

Our thanks to Theresa Walker of the Rockingham Planning Commission for this guest article. The Drinking Water Source Protection Program invites authors who would like to propose a source protection article for this newsletter to view our "Guidelines for Guest Articles" at www.des.state.nh.us/dwssp/newsltr.htm.

Watershed Protection Funding Catalog Updated

Interested in sponsoring an event like the Exeter River Alewife Festival or some other watershed protection event, but don't know how you'd ever start? EPA's recently updated Catalog of Federal Funding Sources for Watershed Protection (previously published in 1999) is now available online as an easy-to-use, searchable website. Watershed groups and water suppliers will find information on over 80 Federal funding sources that may be available to help fund watershed-related projects. For more information or to search the website, visit www.epa.gov/watershedfunding.

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Putting Your Source Assessment Results To Work For You

A series exploring ways that assessment results can be used to focus your protection efforts.

Don't Forget Septic Systems as Potential Threats

How often should you inspect your septic tank? When should you have it pumped out? How can you maximize the life expectancy of your septic system? What inexpensive device can reduce the solids loading to your leach field by a factor of six to seven? If you don't know the answers to these questions, chances are the septic system owners in your source protection area don't know either. It's up to you to get the word out to them.

Septic systems and sewer lines account for a large number of high vulnerability ratings in the Source Assessment Reports. Most (55 percent) community water supply wells received a high vulnerability rating due to the density of septic systems or the presence of sewer lines in their wellhead protection areas. And 82 percent of community and non-transient wells received either a high or medium vulnerability rating for this criteria.

As with any Source Assessment Report results, you can refer to DES's fact sheet WD-WSEB-12-8, "Protecting Public Drinking Water Sources Based on Source Assessment Reports" (available at www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/ws/ws-12-8.htm), to see which protection measures DES recommends. For septic systems, the fact sheet lists education, household hazardous waste collection, health ordinances, and water quality monitoring as typical protection measures.

According to Jay Baas, septic system inspector with DES's Subsurface Systems Bureau, the useful life of a septic system is limited, and the best ways to extend it are to inspect the tank every year, pump it every two to three years, and use effluent filters to keep solids out of the leach bed. "Effluent filters, which can be retrofitted to almost any existing septic tank, increase the solids removal efficiency of the tank from 80% (without a filter) to 97 percent," according to Baas. When you consider that clogging of the leach bed with solids is the leading cause of system failure, the typical installation cost of \$150 is a great investment in extending the system's life expectancy. "If you don't have a filter you should definitely consider installing one," Baas adds. But remember, only licensed septic installers can do the work.

For more tips that you can pass on to septic system owners in your source protection area, see DES fact sheet WD-SSB-2 at www.des.state.nh.us/factsheets/ssb/ssb-2.htm or call 271-3501. You can also see DES's *Greenworks* newsletter from March 1997, available at www.des.state.nh.us/GW/gw_archive/gw-13.htm or by calling 271-7889. Finally, make sure you are using the latest version of DES's "Dos and Don'ts" flier when you do your periodic public education mailings.

DES Receives Environmental Merit Award for Private Well Initiative

A team from DES's Water Supply Engineering Bureau was recently awarded an Environmental Merit Award by U.S. EPA, Region 1 for their Private Well Initiative. Launched in 1999, the initiative encourages homeowners with private wells to regularly test their drinking water for both naturally-occurring and other contaminants.

The initiative began by developing and distributing a series of six public service announcements. The radio spots focused on not only encouraging private well testing, but also water conservation, appropriate disposal of household hazardous waste, and watershed and groundwater protection. To reinforce the messages, staff developed a poster and brochure and distributed them state-wide, town-by-town through local health officers.

All signs indicate that the campaign has been well-received. Calls to DES came in steadily during the ad cam-

paign. In addition, private homeowner water samples brought into the State Laboratory for analysis have increased, with particular rises in the numbers requesting radon and volatile organic compound (VOC) analysis, both of which were highlighted in the campaign.

This year, DES has expanded the initiative by working with the N.H. Department of Health and Human Services to provide a series of "healthy home" seminars aimed at educating the real estate industry about private wells, septic systems, and indoor air contaminants.

For more information about the New Hampshire Private Well Initiative please contact Nicole Clegg at 271-4071, or visit DES's web site at www.des.state.nh.us.



Test Your Private Well

Water Conservation Rules Advisory Committee Forming Now

In 2002, the legislature passed and the Governor signed into law, Senate Bill 440 (www.gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2002/SB0440.html), which amended the New Hampshire Groundwater Protection Act (RSA 485-C) to include a definition for "water conservation" and require that DES develop water conservation best management practice rules for new groundwater withdrawals associated with public water systems, new groundwater withdrawals that exceed 57,600 gallons over any 24 hour period, and for new surface water withdrawals that require a 401 Water Quality Permit. The statutory amendments specifically stipulate that the rules strike a reasonable balance between environmental, energy, and economic impacts, and be consistent with current industry standards and practices for different types of water users.

DES has developed a preliminary draft of the water conservation rules and is convening an advisory committee to provide recommendations regarding the rules prior to initiating the formal rulemaking process. At the first committee meeting scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on July 15, 2003, DES will present the preliminary draft water conservation rules. Following the presentation, stakeholders will be invited to discuss the preliminary draft and the advisory committee process for finalizing the proposed rules.

If you are interested in participating in the advisory committee, please contact Brandon Kernen at 271-0660 or bkernen@des.state.nh.us. Copies of the draft rules will be provided to all participants on the advisory committee by July 1, 2003.

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To switch to an electronic subscription, provide your name and email address to Nicole Clegg at nclegg@des.state.nh.us.

Keeping Stormwater Where It Falls

A conference on low-impact development

November 6-7, 2003
Montshire Museum, Norwich, VT
(just over the border from Hanover, NH)

Sponsored by the Upper Valley
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